



## THE AMPLEFORTH SOCIETY

**Minutes of the AGM of the Ampleforth Society held on Saturday 15th October 2016 at 9:15am in the College Library, Ampleforth Abbey.**

### **Officials Present**

Fr Terence Richardson (Fr Prior)  
David O'Kelly (DOK)  
Jeremy Deedes (JD)  
Charles Grace (CG)

### **Hon Gen Secretary**

Fr Hugh Lewis Vivas (Fr Hugh)

### **Hon Life Vice President**

Michael O'Kelly (MOK)

### **In attendance**

Sue Fisher  
Philippa Jalland (M13)

### **1. Prayers**

### **2. Apologies**

John Collins, Patrick Tolhurst.

### **3. Approval of minutes of the meeting held on 10th October 2015**

Minutes were approved.

### **4. Declaration of any interests**

Fr Wulstan – Headmaster of the College, Trustee of the St Laurence Education Trust, Trustee of the Ampleforth Abbey Trust, Director of Ampleforth Abbey Trading Limited and a Trustee of the St Benet's Trust which is the governing body of St Benet's Hall.

DOK – Member of the OACC, which receives a grant from the Ampleforth Society.

JD – now has no declarations of interests as he is no longer a parent at the school.

### **5. Reports of the Society**

#### **a. The Treasurer (DOK)**

DOK reported that the accounts remain healthy and we find ourselves in a good position.

The Society's assets were valued at over £631,000 at the end of the financial year. This is an

increase of £63,000 on the books, which is an 11% increase on the year. Our income for the year was just over £88,000 which comes from the investment income from the portfolio and a donation from the College to the Society.

In the last year we spent just over £94,000 on a range activities including grants to OA clubs and societies, outreach activities and the management and governance of the trustees.

This year the Society spent £1,000 on a summer music outreach programme, which was very successful. This kind of support will grow as the Society grows. The event was so successful that Ian Little will be running it again next year. Governance costs have increased this year entirely due to the fact that the trustees now have some indemnity insurance which we have never had before.

We should not be concerned that our expenditure has exceeded income again this year. The finance comes from our investment portfolio. The Society has an Investment Committee and the Trustees understand that we only use the capital, which is sufficient for us to do our business. Our business activity is increasing and it is a continuing pull on resources and any income we receive from the College is dependent on student numbers. The 0.5% received from the College has not gone up in the last couple of years and this has to be set against the school fees not going down. Our activities are increasing meaning that the debt continues to exist but the Trustees are reassured that we have the assets to cover it.

Importantly, the Society continues to provide bursaries for the school and this last year we funded between two and three students on full bursaries through the College. In the longer term it remains our aspiration to reach three full bursaries as a starting point.

Paul Irven asked DOK if we would always do three 100% bursaries or whether we would ever consider dividing it between more than three students on less than 100%? DOK responded that the School Governors decide how it is assigned to students.

Tom Coady asked DOK whether there are any guidelines of the investment portfolio or restrictions on the type of investments that can be made. DOK responded that there are certain guidelines used in terms of reference and the Trustees meet with investment managers twice a year to ensure that the terms of reference given to them are being adhered to, particularly in regards to the sensitivities of where we should and shouldn't invest.

Can we adopt the accounts? Accounts approved.

Can we continue with Armstrong and Watson to produce our accounts? Approved.

**b. The Vice President (Fr Wulstan)**

In St Benedict's rule he says that the Abbot and the Monastery must arrange everything in such a way that the strong have something to strive for and the weak have nothing to run from. In the schools this means that we treat each child as an individual and we seek to recognise that that child's strengths and weaknesses so we can provide support and encouragement, so they grow in confidence. This means that they stretch and achieve in all areas of school life. We were very pleased with our exam results last year with our GCSE results being the best ever achieved at this stage. 63% of all grades achieved at GCSE were A\* and A. 86% of all grades were A\*-B. We were 146 in the Telegraph table.

45% of all grades at A Level were A\*-A and 72% were A\*-B. Academically the school is strong and we are seeing an increase in academic performance.

The intention, however, is not to turn Ampleforth into an academic hot house. There is much more to an Ampleforth education - spiritually, socially and academically we are interested in all aspects of a person's life. You will see the new Performing Arts Centre, which opens up a whole load of new possibilities. The new Cookery School has also been very popular and of course there is plenty of sport. The music outreach remains a very important part of what we do in the schools also.

Fundamentally the all-round Ampleforth education allows children to flourish not only as an individual but in a community. A community is prepared to go out of our way for the good of others, even if it is an inconvenience.

The Ampleforth Society is important to the school and to the monastic community. The bonds of friendship, the spiritual bonds that bring us together, the extension of that community to involve many more people is a proper expression of our understanding of community and what it is to offer hospitality. Thank you to all members of the Ampleforth Society who continue to support the school in many different ways.

The three year development plan is currently underway and we are currently focusing on things that need to be achieved in the next 12 months. We are looking at areas that are good and how we can make them excellent. It focuses on the academic, pastoral and spiritual provision and also concentrates on our communications, marketing, the importance of our different relationships, friendships and networks. School marketing has been reviewed over the summer.

In terms of the outreach programme into prep schools we have just had Old Buckenham Hall school here last week and Westminster Cathedral Choir School the week before. There are also members of staff going out to prep schools on a regular basis.

**c. The Managing Trustee (JD)**

I was asked last year if I would take on the role of managing trustee and it was an honour to accept. Last year we discussed an annual planning cycle, which is now beginning to work quite well.

We now have a Society of around 16,000 people with Ampleforth being a common interest. We communicated that decision with all members through letters and articles in the Ampleforth Diary. We are also in the middle of talks with St Benet's Hall and the Ampleforth Lourdes Hospitality to bring those members under the Society as well. We also wrote and produced the Society brochure, which was circulated to everyone.

We have strengthened the management of the Society and each of the Trustees now have defined roles to help implement the plan.

We continue to run a number of well-attended events in London and in Yorkshire and we are looking to have more events all over the country with an increased attendance. We are also strengthening the relationship with the schools.

Careers is another aspect we are looking at and we are aiming to get members of the Society to come in to talk to the students about their own careers. I would also like to build up the networking/mentoring opportunities we have in the Ampleforth Society to help people in their careers throughout their lives.

There is now a programme in place to welcome the Upper Sixth students to the Society before they leave in the summer term. We are keen to bring in members at a younger age and get them involved in our various events and activities.

Goals for this year and next – another key pillar is the religious outreach which we are trying to increase to incorporate Ampleforth's Benedictine core values.

We are also looking at improving our communication with members and now have an events page in each issue of the Ampleforth Diary.

We are really looking forward to building up the Ampleforth Society; it is a global community of some 16,000 members and it has huge potential.

**d. The President (Fr Prior)**

It seemed like a series of crises this year for the Monastery. We started off by losing one Headmaster and then a second. We then had these allegations against the Abbot, who has had to step aside whilst an investigation takes place. Finally, we received the bad news that the firm refurbishing Bolton House where the Monastery were supposed to be moving in October, had gone into administration. We are currently in the process of letting out a new contract for the completion of the building, which has put the whole thing back by approximately six months. The plan is still for the Monastery to move to Bolton House so that we can refurbish the Monastery, but that will probably take place in the Easter holidays.

The allegations against Abbot Cuthbert are the most serious of things that have happened. We are confident that the Abbot has done nothing wrong but it will take time for this to be worked through and it is important that we go through all the proper processes.

Good news - we received a grant for phase one of the repair of the Abbey Church roof from the Listed Places of Worship Scheme. At St Benet's Hall we also received a grant which is enabling us to go co-educational over time, which is a major achievement. We are currently fundraising to buying a building that we rent to house mixed students.

There is a good chance that someone is going to join us as a Postulant in the Monastery after Christmas. In Zimbabwe Br Joseph is now returning to the monastery after being a hermit.

The current situation has meant that two members of the community have had to take on two roles. Fr Wulstan continues as Procurator and Headmaster, but we are about to appoint an interim Procurator. I currently have to do a lot of what the Abbot would normally do in addition to being the Prior. I am grateful to the brethren who have taken over some things, such as retreat giving, to allow me to do this.

One thing that has been a real blessing in the monastery is our deanery structure, which was introduced two years ago. This has helped people to voice their anxieties and worries. We

are continuing to see the value of the deanery structure where the monastery is divided into four groups who meet once a month.

On the parishes we have now handed over Bamber Bridge and there is a farewell Mass on 27th November when the new Salford priest takes over; Fr Colin will remain there for the rest of the academic year. We will continue handing over parishes so that we can have more of the community at Ampleforth.

The sick and the elderly – Fr Theodore is resident at Leyland and is not at all well (95 years) and is currently our oldest member of the community. He is quite frail and housebound, but very well looked after. Fr Aidan and Fr Augustine are both frail and in the infirmary. Fr Anselm has been, and still is, in the infirmary but he is returning to things a bit more. Fr Cyprian has moved into the infirmary. Fr Francis Davidson's heart is giving up and he finds day to day tasks a struggle. Fr Francis Dobson is suffering from bone cancer and has had a hip replacment but is recovering well from that. Fr Anthony has been really under the weather and will continue to be through the winter. Fr Bonaventure has dementia and is now in a home, as he could not get the care he needed at Ampleforth. Fr Michael has breathing problems and was in hospital for a night and is currently in the infirmary. Fr Dominic is quite well apart from his eyes.

Finally, Fr Martin, who died just over a year ago, was an artist and we would like to sell some of his paintings to raise money for the Monastery. We are thinking of announcing this to Ampleforth Society members first; they will be sold over the internet and Tennants will put an insurance value on the pictures.

Paul Irven asked Fr Terence if there were any sub-contractors from the Bolton House project who were in distress and whether there is anything we can do to help them? Fr Terence responded that he was not aware that anyone was in distress and that we had done everything possible to support them during this difficult time.

Thank you for all your support and prayers.

**e. The Development Director (SF)**

My immediate focus has been to raise the outstanding £1.9 million for the monastery before work starts in Summer 2017. In the past few months we have raised almost £1 million. We have also re-submitted an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund, which was for the refurbishment of the Abbey Church and a further project to welcome more visitors to Ampleforth. We will hear the outcome on 15th November 2016.

The other focus for this year is to work with Jeremy and the other Trustees to make sure the Ampleforth Society goes from strength to strength.

Next calendar year we will be focusing on supporting bursaries. It is so important that anyone who wants to come here can have the opportunity to do so. We will also be re-launching our legacy campaign. We have a few people already committed, but the more we can get the better for the future of Ampleforth.

**f. The Chaplain elect (Fr Hugh)**

There are two events that come to mind that I have attended this year; the Mass and Drinks at the Brompton Oratory, which takes place every year, as well as the City Mass at St Mary Moorfields, both of which were well attended. We are currently unsure if the St Mary Moorfields Mass will continue in its current location but if it can't continue, we will look at hosting it elsewhere. I would like to thank Rory Smith (H09) in his absence, who did so much as Ampleforth Society Coordinator to make the burdens of being secretary less onerous and to thank Philippa Jalland (M13) who has taken on that role so efficiently.

Vote was taken to elect Fr Hugh as Society Chaplain - motion passed.

**6. Any other business**

None.

**7. Prayers for the deceased members of the Society**

Prayers were said and a list of deceased OAs was read.